

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS DHAKA 003681

SIPDIS

FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE  
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCSNSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,  
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45  
(MAJ NICHOLLS)

USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [BG](#) [OCII](#) [BG](#)  
SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Terrorism and Islamic Apologists;  
Dhaka

Summary: An editorial page article in "Daily Star"  
criticizes Islamic apologists who try to rationalize recent  
terrorist activities instead of critical inquiry and self  
examination.

-----  
Terrorism and Islamic Apologists  
-----

"The Islamist terrorist and the Islamic apologist"  
An editorial page article by Mahfuzur Rahman in independent  
English "Daily Star" opines (7/31):

The terror of September 11, 2001 has produced a great deal  
of anger against Islam in the western world; it has also  
produced a crop of apologists, both among Muslims everywhere  
and in the west. The latter group includes political leaders  
keen to be seen as friends of Muslims, especially the Muslim  
electorate. It is easy to understand western politicians  
standing up for mainstream Islam. It is difficult to  
understand Muslim apologists at a time when the primary need  
in Muslim societies is for critical inquiry and self  
examination.

In the popular writings that have emerged since September  
eleven, those of Asghar Ali Engineer stand out, not least in  
the frequency at which they appear. Their author is also a  
good example of a Muslim apologist. The following paragraphs  
are aimed primarily at his latest article, written after the  
London bombings of July 7, 2005 and printed in The Daily  
Star, July 21, 2005, and which is fairly representative of  
the apologist genre of thinking.  
Mr. Engineer considers the London bombers not fanatics but  
"angry young men boiling with anger at these western  
countries destroying their countries and killing and raining  
death and destruction." The use of "their countries" is  
rather puzzling. The bombers were all British. Could he be  
implying that even though Britain was their adopted home,  
their real allegiance lay abroad, perhaps based on some  
concept of Islamic ummah? If that is the case, the "Islamic"  
nature of their violence becomes all the more evident.  
Talk of violence and Islam, the theme of Mr. Engineer's  
apologia, and one has to talk of present-day Iraq. Mr.  
Engineer is in no doubt that the violence there is simply a  
product of rage against occupation of the country by  
infidels. Such rage, in must be granted, is very much  
present in the country. It must also be conceded that much  
of the terrorist rage is directed against the infidels and  
not at home-bred autocratic regimes, or for that matter  
against an occupier when it happens to be another Arab  
country. After all, there was no such rage when Iraq  
occupied Kuwait one and a half decades ago. But the point  
about the rage being anti-infidel, and not anti-autocracy,  
only reinforces the argument that much of the terrorist acts  
in Iraq today is "Islamic" in nature, at least by the  
terrorists' definition of Islam.

Chammas